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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General presents position paper on peace-keeping to Security Council; says international action must extend into reconstruction, rehabilitation and reestablishment of government; calls for deeper commitment to cooperation and true multilateralism in tackling root causes of conflict.

+ United States says Secretary-General's position paper reflects careful preparation and contains very valuable analysis and statistics; United Nations must make constant adjustments to demands of peace-keeping.

+ United Nations University and International Peace Academy to host Symposium on New Dimensions of Peace-Keeping Operations in Tokyo on 19 and 20 January.

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If conflicts between and within States are to be controlled and resolved, international action must extend beyond traditional peace-keeping into reconstruction, rehabilitation and the reestablishment of effective government, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. He said such action should not only address the immediate causes of conflicts, but also their root causes, which often lay in the absence of economic opportunities and in social inequities. The Secretary-General also called for a deeper commitment to cooperation and true multilateralism. He made those comments in a position paper on peace-keeping -- a supplement to his 1992 report "An Agenda for Peace" -- which he presented to the Security Council today. He later gave a press conference on the subject at Headquarters.

In his position paper, the Secretary-General highlighted the importance of preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. He noted that Member States collectively encouraged him to play an active role in that field, but were individually reluctant to do so when they were involved in a conflict. The solution might lie in creating a climate of opinion in which the norm would be for States to accept an offer of United Nations good offices, or for them to invite such an offer. He called attention to the problems of finding senior persons with the diplomatic skills to serve as Special Representatives or

Special Envoys, and of establishing and financing small missions for preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. A contingency provision for such activities might be included in the regular budget, while the existing provision for unforeseen and extraordinary activities might be enlarged for dealing with internal conflicts, as well as international ones.

Peace-keeping operations should not be given enforcement tasks, the Secretary-General stressed. "Nothing is more dangerous for a peace-keeping operation than to require it to use force when its existing composition, armament, logistic support and deployment deny it the capacity to do so", he said. The Security Council could entrust enforcement tasks to groups of Member States, thus providing the United Nations with a capacity it would otherwise lack. However, such a response could have a negative impact on the Organization's stature and credibility. There was also a danger that States involved might claim approval for actions not envisaged by the Council.

The Secretary-General underlined the need for unity of command of peace-keeping operations. Troop-contributing Governments should not provide guidance, let alone give orders, on operational matters. He said that the availability of troops and equipment had palpably declined, and that the United Nations should seriously consider the creation of a rapid reaction force. He told correspondents that the Organization had today signed an agreement with Jordan, by which that country would make troops available for such a force. He also suggested that the Council establish the availability of the necessary troops and equipment before creating new operations or giving new tasks to existing ones.

The Secretary-General began his press conference by saying that the United Nations was going through the most significant phase in its history. It had learned hard lessons from its experiences in recent years, and must now apply those lessons. If Member States were prepared to act on the suggestions in his position paper -- which had been received very favourably in the Security Council -- United Nations peace-keeping would be much more effective. That would enable the Organization to concentrate on the broader mission of development. He went on to say that if the United Nations asked more from its Member States, they had a right to expect more from it.

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The Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, today said that the Secretary-General's position paper on peace-keeping had been carefully prepared, and that it contained very valuable analysis and statistics. She told correspondents at Headquarters that it was "absolutely an appropriate role" for the Secretary-General to make such a report. However, she added that the issue of micro-management of the Security Council and the whole question of responsibilities and relationships required further discussion.

Ambassador Albright said that "peace-keeping, peacemaking and peace-building is clearly a work in progress, and one in which the United Nations has to make constant adjustments". The Secretary-General's paper would be the basis of a dialogue in the United Nations and in the United States, she added.

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The United Nations University and the International Peace Academy will host a Symposium on New Dimensions of United Nations Peace-Keeping Operations in Tokyo on 19 and 20 January. The Symposium is being organized with the support of the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Key speakers will include Yasushi Akashi, Special Representative for the former Yugoslavia; Hisashi Owada, Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations; Marrack Goulding, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs; and Sir Brian Urquhart, former Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs. They will be joined by government leaders and academics from Japan and other countries, and by representatives of non-governmental organizations.

The Symposium will examine such dimensions of peace-keeping as the future role of the United Nations in preventing and resolving conflicts, and the potential contributions that Member States and non-State actors can make. Specific issues to be covered by different panels include preventive action, humanitarian emergencies in conflict situations, the use of force, post-conflict peace processes, and the role of Japan in future peace-keeping efforts.

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